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IVAN L. BENNETT, JR., M. D.

1922 - 1990

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 27, 1990

It is our purpose and most fitting today for us to join Martha, Paul, Susan, Jeffrey and Katie to pay tribute to Ivan and to reflect with gratitude that he lived a good life and gave so much to medical science and to his country. Appropriately, we gather here not to review his public record, impressive as it was, nor to mourn his loss to New York and to the nation, but to memorialize him as a warm and thoughtful human being to whom we, and a host of physicians, will ever be indebted because of his character and the type of man that he was, rather than merely because of what he accomplished.

My own association with Ivan extended over three decades. He was the kind of person with whom one shared hopes and doubts with understanding and confidence. Life now, without Ivan, will have much less meaning and never be the same for his many friends and for me. Such friendships, like old wines, improve with age, and at this stage of life, such bonds are seldom really kindled.

After his house officership at the Grady Memorial Hospital, Ivan progressed as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy, as a house officer in pathology and medicine at Johns Hopkins and Duke, followed by professorships at Yale and Johns Hopkins, where he headed the Division of Biology. Ivan then rapidly progressed to chairmanship of pathology at Hopkins, professorship

in medicine and Dean at New York University and ultimately as that great institution's Acting President.

Ivan had natural blessings of high intelligence, a deep concern for others and an impelling desire to tackle difficult problems. These qualities and dogged perserverence enabled him to find answers to many of these problems. Ivan had the unusual capacity to function creatively as a medical scientist and teacher, as a medical administrator and as a dedicated and noble citizen who served his country. His scientific work embraced many fields of biology. In and outside the laboratory and clinic, he was always abreast of current knowledge and often he was years ahead.

The privilege of having known the Bennetts compels me to say that his finest mark of greatness was the love and affection which he gave as a husband and as a father. Martha, and the children, returned this affection and loving care to him in full measure. Their loss is much deeper but we hope that they will find some solace in knowing that those here today, and a host of friends everywhere, share their grief.

Few American physicians have contributed so much and so wisely in the public interest as has Ivan. How fortunate for the United States-Japan Cooperative Medical Science Program that his wise and inspired leadership spanned over eighteen years. Unstintingly, he gave of himself, often to the detriment of his health. As a young man in Atlanta, he was marked for leadership.

This stemmed from the admiration which he generated through his knowledge and keen insight. Ivan's clinical knowledge coupled with an authoritative and skeptical mind, made him a formidable opponent in medical debate and indispensable as a medical counselor in the highest echelons. He had a keen mind and a sharp wit. When an adversary posed an easy, superficial answer to a tough scientific question, his tongue could be prickly and his criticism constructive and useful. Also, he had a gay sense of humor of which his friends were affectionately aware. His warm capacity for friendship was intense to which friendship he contributed full measure.

Ivan had good taste and unique talent for choosing the right people for the proper job. He had a great sense of humble pride in the accomplishments made. He labored hard to promote the welfare of good scholars and found gratification in watching associates receive plaudits for their work, much of which he stimulated. His record of public service is endless. In the public interest, how many trips were made to Washington, to Europe, to the Far East, and elsewhere. How many hours of study at night and weekends were there when others were resting? These were endless. The nation's leading medical societies honored him with membership and officership.

Added to these remarkable qualities, Ivan was affectionately considerate of others, including our wives and family in a fashion dictated much more than by just gentlemanly manners. He delighted in a good dinner and fellowship in the warmth of his home and when away with friends. Ivan's life and work required frequent absences from New York. Martha needed not worry about him, even though he was often accompanied by feckless companions with questionable reputations. His wry comments about political maneuverings, a good book or a clever story often made the evening.

Perhaps I have spoken too long but it has been with the hope that the words would comfort a bit while we linger in tribute to our friend. His death, along with the precious few like him, signals even more the end of an amazing era. This has been said before about others many times in the past. Yet, this is our time; these are our feelings; this is our dear friend and companion whom we bid goodbye. How fortunate to have lived with him. The heritage which he leaves is one of excellence: a loving family to whom we convey our warm sentiments, a richness in friends and an astonishing record of achievement in medical science and public service.

Our memories of you, Ivan, will be fresh and green.

I cannot leave this podium without expressing grateful appreciation to our Japanese colleagues and their medical associates who so willingly and graciously rendered the best possible medical care to Ivan Bennett. We are beholden to them for their dignified sincerity which has been a fitting lesson of friendship.